

Translation of Sannyasniray by Shyamdas.

MY CONCLUSIONS ON RENUNCIATION

How much to renounce, when to renounce, what to renounce and most importantly, what is real renunciation? Shri Vallabhacharya answered these questions for his disciple Narahari Sanyasi in the teaching that follows.

In the Path of Grace, renunciation is strictly for the experience of divine love and can be done without stepping outside of the home. A thorough study of this text will remove all doubts concerning what to leave and what to gain.

In order to remove anxiety, I now consider the true nature of renunciation. Renunciation has been specifically mentioned in the paths of Devotion and Knowledge. Renunciation should never be undertaken in the Path of Karma, especially during this current age of struggle. And so I present my thoughts on the true nature of renunciation and how a person should attain it according to the Path of Loving Devotion. (1-2)

If one renounces the world with the hopes of attaining perfection by listening to sacred teachings and other related spiritual practices, I say to them that world renunciation is not advisable. The reasons are that for the practice and protection of devotion, one needs to take the spiritual assistance of others and the practice of renunciation, especially the taking of sanyasa (becoming a monk), can create a false sense of pride. The sanyasi's restrictions are mostly contrary to devotional practices. (2-4a)

If one feels that worldly life is obstructive to devotional life and therefore renounces the home, let it be known that the same obstructions found at home will arise again elsewhere in the form of bad association. Overcome with mundane hankerings, the person who renounces the home becomes a hypocrite, for these are the impure days of the age of struggle. Know that Hari will never enter the heart of a person whose body is overcome with worldly desires. For these reasons, renunciation of the world will not provide satisfactory results. (4b-6)

In the higher states of devotion, when one yearns to experience the rapture of the Beloved's separation, renunciation is praised. Then a change of cloth is made in order to break ties from worldly family members and for no other reason. (7)

Concerning practice, the guru of lawful devotion is the sage Kaudinya Rishi, while the grace-filled gurus are the Gopis of Vrindavan. The attainment of Shri Krishna can never be dependent upon any formula. Shri Krishna, who is perfect bhava, is attained through the precise emulation of those who have already attained Him. (8)

The bhakta who has attained the state of Krishna awareness is divinely dismayed for she can no longer remain without her Beloved. She is afflicted, yet her condition is not physical. For such an exalted bhakta, wisdom and knowledge of Brahman's attributes are actually obstructions. (9)

A renunciate who has distinct knowledge can go to the highest material sphere of Satya Loka. Know that the reward attained always corresponds to the type of worship that was performed. Without a doubt, the knowledge-filled renunciates can remain in Satya Loka. (10-11a)

Like fire appears from a piece of wood, the Beloved manifests from the heart right before the bhakta and then re-enters the blessed being. This is really the only way the bhakta's obstructions are overcome. (11b-12a)

The bhakta who does not have the Blessed Lord directly in front of her maintains her life by feeling His virtues. The Blessed Lord Himself is the reward and He does not wish to obstruct His bhakta by giving her mere words of encouragement that could actually diminish the intensity of

the devotional experience. In this divine fashion His kindness is not compromised. This type of renunciation is rare and attained only by love. (12b-14a)

In the Path of Knowledge, two kinds of renunciation have been spoken about. One type of practitioner practices renunciation to attain knowledge. The superior adept resorts to renunciation after knowledge has arisen. In the first type of renunciation, it takes hundreds of births to attain perfection. We also hear from the Vedas that for this knowledge to arise, sacrifice and other Vedic practices are necessary. And so, Sanyasa in this age of struggle creates only regret and breeds hypocrisy. Therefore do not renounce along the lines of the Path of Knowledge, especially during this age of Kali when impurities are very powerful. (14b-17a)

If the impurities of the Kali Yuga arise in the practice of devotion, then what should be done? The answer to that question is that in the path of devotion, from the very beginning, there can never be any ruin. A single example of such an occurrence cannot be found. When the bhakta has renounced her worldly well-being to delve into the depths of inner renunciation, what obstruction could ever arise for such a blessed one? If Hari Himself cannot impede her, then how could there be any other hindrance? And if He did, then it would be like a mother who refuses to feed her own child. (17b-19)

The words of people who follow the Path of Knowledge will never bewilder the bhakta. Why would Hari confuse His bhaktas to whom He has given His very Self and is so loved by them also? (20)

Therefore bhaktas should only renounce along the devotional path I have narrated. Anyone who becomes a renunciate for their own selfish benefit becomes corrupted in the process. This is my firm opinion. (21)

In this way, with the grace of Shri Krishna, Shri Vallabhacharya has without a doubt decided that one should choose the devotional type of renunciation, otherwise the practitioner will fall from his purpose. (22)